

**U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) Contributions to
Federal Efforts to Rebuild Industries and Stimulate Business in the Gulf Coast**

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at DOC has begun to disperse \$128 million to assist local communities in rebuilding Gulf oysterbeds and conduct fisheries monitoring.
- DOC led the first-ever domestic investment mission – to the Gulf Coast region -- with over 30 major companies with at least \$10 million to invest participating.
- DOC continues to promote business opportunities in the Gulf Region, participating in 12 events outside the region –most recently, Secretary Gutierrez hosted over 200 business and community leaders in Washington, D.C. to discuss recovery efforts.
- DOC launched the Hurricane Contracting Information Center (HCIC) to assist U.S. businesses, particularly small, minority – women – and locally – owned, in participating in the Gulf Coast rebuilding efforts. The HCIC website has been directly responsible for linking over 55,000 visitors to the Federal Business Opportunities website and over 24,000 visitors to Center Contractor Registration system.
- The Minority Business Development Agency at DOC has assisted over 340 displaced minority firms to prepare and submit applications for disaster relief, emergency loans and insurance claims, reconstruct business plans and other key business documents; assisted approximately 1,275 minority business entrepreneurs (MBEs) with the identification of procurement opportunities; and conducted education and outreach activities reaching more than 4,000 MBEs.
- NOAA has surveyed the region for wrecks, oil rigs, large debris and shoaling to keep commercial shipping lanes open, and provided critical information for clearing Gulf waterways that had been paralyzed in at least 20 ports.
- The Economic Development Administration (EDA) at DOC has made \$20.9 million of economic recovery and development investments in the Gulf region – helping to generate more than \$170 million in private capital investment and over 1500 jobs.
- The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at DOC is investing \$4.5 million in partnership with the Gulf Coast states to support the recovery of manufacturers affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Examples of Gulf Coast Economic Recovery

Small business recovery

- In Orleans Parish alone, more than 17,000 businesses have reopened - approximately 90% of pre-Katrina levels.
- Examples of small businesses who have worked with the federal government include:
 - St. Claude Hardware, a small hardware supply business that's been located in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans for 16 years, closed due to flooding. The HCIC gave the company information to help them establish a business relationship with a prime contractor in the area for material suppliers. Since then, St. Claude has doubled its staff, competed successfully with larger companies, and been a great asset to the re-growth of the city.
 - Tommy's Cuisine, a restaurant in New Orleans was forced to close by the storm. A long-term, low-interest loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA) enabled the restaurant to rebuild its clientele, supplies, and employee base.

Business investment

- The Home Depot has committed more than \$100 million to the region in refurbished and new stores, as well as charitable contributions.
- Shell announced an additional \$150 million investment in Louisiana – spurred in part by the GO Zone tax incentives
- The Pritzker Group has said it will re-open its New Orleans Hyatt Hotel, and unveiled plans for a New Orleans Jazz Park.
- Seaboard Marine has added two freighters to the Port of New Orleans -- transporting goods between the Gulf Coast and Central America.
- KB Homes, in conjunction with the Shaw Group, has started work on 73 new homes in the Garden District of New Orleans. They ultimately plan to build 5,000 homes in the region.

Port Activity

- The value of imports moving through the Gulf ports was 25% higher over the first 5 months of 2006 than the comparable period in the previous year and flows through the specifically impacted ports, were 14% higher. Imports of seafood, including shrimp, have returned to their pre-Katrina volumes.
- The value of exports moving through the Gulf ports was 15% higher over the first 5 months of 2006 than the comparable period in the previous year, while flows through the specifically impacted ports were equal to their prior performance. Exports of seafood are significantly above pre-Katrina levels.